

A TIME FOR HOPE  
Rabbi Elliot Skiddell  
Congregation Beth Emeth

A famous dictum of Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah teaches that *Im ein kemach, ein Torah* / If there is no bread, there can be no wisdom. Without physical sustenance we would be too weak and disheartened to seek wisdom, to strive for knowledge. We are all struggling to get through one of the most difficult economic crises that our nation has ever faced. In the face of this economic struggle it would be very easy to throw up our hands and surrender to despair, but we must not succumb to that temptation. We have the collective wisdom to meet the challenges before us and we have the communal responsibility to help one another through the most difficult of times. It was only a few weeks ago that we witnessed an outpouring of the sense of hope and renewal that our nation needs so desperately, as our 44<sup>th</sup> president was inaugurated. All of us, without regard to political persuasion, must feel that the nation is headed in a new direction. In a few years, we hope to look back at this moment in history as a real turning point that resulted in renewed prosperity and served as the springboard for great accomplishments. Already, in the earliest days of the new administration there are indications, some symbolic others substantive, that the economic recovery will include the *kemach* – the sustenance – that will generate new research, new ideas, new technologies and new learning that, in turn, will result in new jobs and even entire new industries. Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah continued his teaching by flipping his dictum around and reminding us that, *Im ein Torah, ein Kemach* / If there is no wisdom, there can be no bread. This is the time to have confidence in our new leadership, to recognize that they do have the wisdom, knowledge and abilities to bring about transformation of our country and lead us to a better time and place. This is the time for hope.

*Have a question for Rabbi Skiddell or an issue you would like to see discussed? Please be in touch at [rabbi@rcbe.org](mailto:rabbi@rcbe.org)*

*Friday Evening Services at Congregation Beth Emeth, located at 36 Franklin Ave. in Hewlett, begin at 8:00 PM. Saturday morning services at 9:30 AM*

*For more information call 374-9220 or go to our updated website: [www.rcbe.org](http://www.rcbe.org)*